

Official Languages

these people; they are hard working, co-operative, aggressive, happy-go-lucky Canadians earning a good living. They are great people. Some of them are getting rich. At the present time some are not getting rich quite as quickly as they or we would like. But we like them as Canadians.

• (5:40 p.m.)

If we who are not of French speaking stock feel self-confident, then we need no special privileges. I appeal to my own people in this regard. The strong can always afford to be generous. I think this is a generous bill. If passed, it will bring up to date in Canada's 102nd year something which may well have been neglected in the past 102 years. Let us bring ourselves up to date. I appeal to those to whom the bill is directed to be generous, patient and gentle with us, as we hope to be with them. Nations, like people, are strong only when they are right. I believe it is always right to be as generous and as gentle as we can.

Mr. John L. Skoberg (Moose Jaw): Mr. Speaker, I shall speak very briefly in this debate. I support the intent and principle of the bill, but I do not agree that a crash program should be instituted at this time for the implementation of bilingualism, whether it involves the learning of the English or French language. It was stated before the committee that in the next four years over \$7 million will be spent on this crash program. I imagine this will be the greatest underestimate ever given. In my opinion, bilingual education must begin in the elementary schools. Rather than instituting a crash program at this time in our history, let this federal money be allocated to the elementary schools system across Canada. I agree 100 per cent with my colleague and the leader of the Creditistes who suggested that bilingual education should begin at the elementary school level and not with the top civil servants. Having read articles about unilingual schools, it has become apparent to me that such a system means segregation rather than integration. It means we are compelling our children to be segregated by background, rather than using a forward-looking approach. We should have across Canada truly bilingual schools, with the federal authorities picking up the added cost of such instruction rather than the property taxpayer, who is now completely overburdened.

I am sure every member of the house agrees that there must be unity and understanding if this bill is to be effective. I believe

[Mr. Bigg.]

the bill must be passed and I shall support it on third reading. We all know it is long past due. At the same time, before passing a bill of this nature there should be attached to it an addendum to the effect that the full intent and provisions of the legislation will not be enforceable for a period of time. I am sure we all realize that many people have to prepare themselves for the change in system. There should be a period of time set down before the provisions of the bill come into effect, so that people may prepare themselves in this fast-changing society. I believe that if Canadians were given this assurance by the minister who will draft the regulations under this bill, there would not be the apprehension there is at the present time. In addition, such a provision would give the provinces an opportunity to effect an orderly system of education which is so necessary at this time in our history. This is my opinion. I express it as an individual and not as a representative of the party of which I am a member. If we are to have an effective bilingual education system, we should start not with older civil servants but with school children; we should make sure they are brought into the picture at an early age.

The federal government should at long last accept its responsibility and effect a federal system of education. There should be no hesitation or concern on the part of the government because of the constitution or anything else. Why cannot the federal government carry out such a program with regard to education? Civil servants, members of the armed forces, members of parliament and many other people move from province to province and there is no concern about the effect this movement has upon the education of their children. I believe this is a matter the house should consider. Liberal members opposite should have the courage to rise and suggest that it be considered.

We have been asked why one would support the amendments proposed to the bill. The answer is simple. The government, particularly in the last two weeks, has proven itself suspect in the eyes of Canadians from the Atlantic to the Pacific. It is suspect in the eyes of the people of Newfoundland because of its complete disregard for the Terms of Union. It is suspect in the eyes of people of western Canada who are fighting to survive against great economic pressure. It is suspect in the eyes of the Indians because consultations are not being carried on with them. The government is suspect in the eyes of members